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DE RUEHBK #4442/01 3392310  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
O 042310Z DEC 08  
FM AMEMBASSY BEIJING  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1228  
INFO RUEHOO/CHINA POSTS COLLECTIVE  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS  
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 6780  
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIJING 004442

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: DECEMBER 4 MFA PRESS BRIEFING: DALAI LAMA AND FRANCE, INDIA AND PAKISTAN, SIX-PARTY TALKS, SUDANESE PRESIDENT BASHIR

¶1. Key points at the December 4 MFA press briefing:

-- China hopes to "repair" its relationship with France, but urges France to "take seriously the feelings of the Chinese people" with regard to the planned meeting between French President Nicolas Sarkozy and the Dalai Lama.

-- Both India and Pakistan are China's "friendly neighbors" and China urges both countries to "step-up dialogue" in order to ensure that stability returns to the region.

-- "Active preparation" for the upcoming round of Six-Party Talks is taking place.

-- China hopes the relevant parties concerned with the International Criminal Court (ICC) indictment of Sudanese President Bashir will engage in "dialogue" in order to "properly handle the issue."

Dalai Lama and France

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¶2. China has repeatedly stated its position regarding French President Nicolas Sarkozy's planned meeting with the Dalai Lama, said MFA spokesperson Liu Jianchao at the December 4 MFA press briefing when asked about the potential impact of the meeting on Sino-French relations. Liu said China's position was "clear," and that China has always viewed its relationship with France from a "long-term and strategic perspective." Liu added that China hopes to "repair" its relationship with France, but that France must "take seriously the feelings of the Chinese people" on this issue. He noted that the planned meeting had "raised strong dissatisfaction amongst the Chinese public" and that China hopes France will "make the right choice" and "create conditions" for an improvement of relations. He added that the Chinese public must "remain calm" despite its dissatisfaction.

¶3. When asked about the impact on Sino-French trade relations, Liu responded that China "attaches great importance" to business relations with France, and that these relations are "closely related" to China's "strategic partnership" with France.

India and Pakistan

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¶4. When asked whether China was in close contact with the Pakistani government in the wake of the Mumbai terror attacks, Liu responded that both India and Pakistan are China's "friendly neighbors," and that both countries should "step-up dialogue" in order to ensure that stability returns to the region. Liu added that China "firmly opposes" acts of terrorism such as those carried out in Mumbai. When asked to respond to a comment made by the Indian Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee that a country had the right to respond to such a terror attack, Liu said that China "takes note" that Indian leaders have made "remarks," but that it hoped the two countries

would diffuse the current situation through "dialogue and consultation." Responding to question about Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's comments regarding China's vulnerability to similar attacks, Liu wondered why President Ahmadinejad would make such comments, and said that China will do all it can to "step-up" its international cooperation to combat terrorism.

Six-Party Talks

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¶ 5. When asked to comment on the upcoming round of Six-Party Talks, Liu said that China has already proposed a date for the talks, and that "active preparation" is taking place.

Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir

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¶ 6. When asked about the possible International Criminal Court (ICC) indictment of Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, Liu noted that China "attaches great importance" to Security Council resolutions, but that it also "respects relevant principles" of "sovereignty and territorial integrity." As for the ICC prosecution of President Bashir, Liu said China hopes the relevant parties will engage in "dialogue" in order to "properly handle the issue."

RMB exchange rate depreciation

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¶ 7. When asked to comment on why the Renminbi (RMB) exchange rate depreciated when it was expected to rise during the Strategic Economic Dialogue (SED) now taking place in Beijing, Liu explained that, since 2005 when China adjusted its exchange rate policy, the

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RMB exchange rate has become more "flexible and interactive," and now depends on the market. He added that China will continue to "adopt the floating exchange rate system" in the future.

Belgian journalist

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¶ 8. When asked to comment on a Chinese Government report concluding a Belgian journalist was not attacked in Henan province as he had claimed, Liu said that the MFA and Henan provincial authorities are continuing to investigate the issue, and that it was hoped the situation would be "properly handled."

EU food ban

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¶ 9. Commenting on a question about the recent EU ban on soy-based infant food products from China due to melamine contamination, Liu said that China "attaches great importance" to food safety, and that it expects to undertake "effective communication" with relevant countries on this issue.

EU anti-dumping ruling

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¶ 10. When asked whether the recent EU anti-dumping ruling might be related to the ongoing Sino-EU tension over the Dalai Lama, Liu had no substantive response but did indicate his hope that overall relations with the EU would not be damaged. For more specific information about the ruling, Liu referred journalists to the Ministry of Commerce.

Presidential Appointment

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¶ 11. When asked to comment, Liu said that President-elect Obama's choice of New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson for Secretary of Commerce was an "internal affair" of the United States.

Doha Round

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¶12. When asked to speculate on whether there would be a breakthrough in the Doha Round of trade liberalization talks before the end of the year, Liu said that China's high-level participation at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and G-20 meetings last month sends a "strong signal" that China "promotes" the Doha Round, and that it is sincere about playing "an active and constructive role" on this issue.

China-Japan-ROK Leaders' Meeting

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¶13. Liu announced that Premier Wen Jiabao will attend the upcoming China-Japan-ROK Leaders' Meeting to be held December 13 in Fukuoka, Japan. During the meeting, it is expected that the three leaders will exchange views on "cooperation" and discuss "regional and international issues."

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